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KLOSTERMANN'S "CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN OF THE PENTATEUCH."*

(An Abstract.)

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"If Wellhausen is right, Old Testament scholars have forfeited respect in holding and teaching doctrines that are now found to be false; if he is wrong, then scholars will not deserve respect until they come boldly forward with convincing proof that he is wrong." This remark is often made, and contains a truth; but the implication contained in it, that the proof of the untenableness of Wellhausen's views will be at the same time proof of the correctness of the traditional position, is not so just. Both may be wrong, because both build upon a wrong basis. The traditional view erred in regarding our Old Testament text as the same now as when it left the author's hand. Astruc erred in the same way, thinking that on the basis of our present text he could separate the documents that Moses used in writing Genesis. Modern criticism is similarly fettered by tradition; present peculiarities of the text are claimed to date from J or E as originally written, when they may very easily date from one of the numerous redactions, early or late, which these sources underwent. The critics make every effort to show that the documents are consistent, and to assign them definite dates, while the Redactor of JE is hunted through the centuries and charged with most startling inconsistencies. This is wrong; he should be first defined as to time, information and ability.

Another error of modern criticism is this:—Astruc, search-

* Two articles in the "*Neue Kirchliche Zeitschrift*," Sept. and Oct. 1890. The present article is scarcely more than a resumé of Prof. Klostermann's "*Beiträge*," which are very elaborate and supported by numerous references; the purpose is not chiefly to exhibit the author's views photographically—to learn them one should consult the original articles—but rather to adapt and transmit his valuable suggestions.

ing as he was for pre-Mosaic authorities, very properly began with a point which was fixed (for him), viz., with Moses himself. Wellhausen and the rest search for post-Mosaic documents but begin also, in fact if not in theory, with the analysis of Genesis. Literary analysis should begin with a fixed point and work back toward the problematic. Such a fixed and well-known point is the discovery of the Deuteronomic Book of the Covenant and its incorporation into the historical narrative. The relation of Rd. to the Book of the Covenant and to the historical narrative would furnish an excellent starting point from which to work upward.

Illustrative of the persistency of old views is the slow progress made in ascertaining the age of P. It was at first supposed to be the oldest document, and J supplementary. Then the latter was found to have been independent. But still an element of P was regarded as the primitive document, until Wellhausen at length woke up to the fact that he had been seeing things upside down, and P was the latest element. The most recent view, that J and E are parallel and Q is parallel to JE and uses it, (by the way, why is not Q the much sought for Redactor?) is much the same as I advocated long ago as the probable solution. The various parallel narratives are all from one original; for centuries before and after the fixing of the Canon of the Torah the traditions and manuscripts were freely handled, in order to preserve the Torah as a living power among the people; and this free reproduction accounts for the stylistic changes to which the present state of the text testifies. Though theoretically recognizing such redactions, the critics practically deny them in presuming to use our present text as a mirror in which to see perfectly the authors and their surroundings. For example, Delitzsch traces minutely the linguistic characteristics of Ecclesiastes; Bickell even knows the arrangement of the leaves of the author's manuscript! They both ignore utterly as well the redaction of which the Epilogue itself speaks, as the whole development of the consonantal text down to the time of the punctators. The careful Riehm supports the position that Deborah was the author of the hymn attributed to her, by the presence of a verb in the first person singular, when

the verb can just as well be pointed in the second person. He adduces as evidences of the North Palestinian dialect of the hymn, one plural form in *in*, while the regular Hebrew plural in *im* occurs 33 times; a second *m* in the preposition '*im* before a suffix, when the regular form has daghesh, the sign of the doubling; a verb, which as pointed is to be sure rare, but which the LXX read as one of the commonest of Hebrew verbs. This is all wrong; critical arguments based on the text of to-day, pointed or unpointed, can have only conditional force.

The most recent step in the history of our text was its punctuation; this was effected under the influence of two motives, viz., to fix upon the consonants a meaning intelligible and unobjectionable as well as correct, and at the same time to avoid mutilating or profaning the sacred text. Before the pointing, came the fixing of the consonantal text; for this purpose, tradition says three holy manuscripts were used, two of which always agreed. We are justified in concluding from the tradition at least this much, that but few copies were employed in the redaction. Further, the tradition itself, purporting to prove the fidelity of the work to the text previously extant, is rather an evidence of important changes from the original; for what little is stated about these three manuscripts points to the inference that they were provided with glosses and translations for the assistance of the lector. It is to be regarded as certain that such glosses and notes were added to the copies used in public reading, from the time of Ezra downward. The Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch testify to various changes in the Hebrew text from his time. The existence of these parallel texts justifies us in careful textual criticism, and we find that many linguistic peculiarities must be referred to inexact transmission, which without such apparatus would naturally be referred to differentiation of documents. Rising still higher, what was the character of literary activity before Ezra's time? So far as we can learn, books were written for devotional purposes. Such was the canonical book of the Kings; how does the author handle his authorities? He treated them as a book already in circulation, known to his readers, and esteemed;

but not revered so highly that slight changes would be intolerable. He neither retained all, nor needlessly altered what he found. His purpose evidently was to adapt the earlier narratives to the needs of his own generation; to make them correspond to his own times, just as they had to the times when they originated. This involved, to speak of no other changes, alterations in language, for it must not be supposed that all linguistic development was confined to post-exilic times; from Moses onward there was change. Moreover there were literary changes also. For the sake of preservation the tables of stone were put within the Ark; but for use, the ten commandments were developed in the different ways exhibited in the Pentateuch. From the nature of the case, these modifications would be greater, the farther back we go; later the Targum became the variable, and the Sacred Text remained comparatively speaking unaltered. From very early times the Torah, or parts of it, were read in public; not the legal portions alone, but the narratives also, for they were needed to illustrate and point the laws. With the old sacred times and places there were certainly associated the traditional accounts of their origin. These were rehearsed to the people as they assembled at the various sanctuaries to the various feasts. The centralization of worship occasioned the collection and harmonious combination of these traditions. We thus reach the original of the Pentateuch. This was subject to repeated modifications, and doubtless suffered most of all at the exile. Ezra's history shows that he aimed at exactness, and he was much more likely to furnish his people with laws by making a careful collation of the various (unofficial) documents preserved among them, than by writing them out *de novo*. From that time on, more exact though the reproductions were, the redactions were far from our ideas of exact editions. The Jews never demanded a photolithographic copy until, the Holy Land lost, the Holy Book became the only common bond and treasure in their possession. It is making too extravagant demands of a text so constituted, to require it to reveal to us its authorship and the chronology and history of the people. To illustrate:— The divine name is regarded as an important means of detecting the documents

in the Pentateuch. Look at the Psalter; it has passed through a period in which there was diverse usage in regard to writing the Divine name. It is not however thought necessary to assign two parallel Psalms to two different authors because the one has *Jahveh* and the other *Elohim*! The present state of the book is adequately accounted for by assuming various collections and modifications to suit varying times and circumstances. Now the same thing happened with Genesis. For example, the creation narrative, handed down in several parallel lines, took on as many characters, unhindered by one another. But when two were combined into one narrative, and the entire section came to be read at once, the name with which the account began must be retained throughout, i. e., *Elohim* must be spoken in place of *Jahveh* in the second narrative. The latter however could be retained in the written text. Likewise the flood narrative, a careful mosaic of two differentiated versions of the same account, yielded to the same necessity. By these examples I try to show my reasons for holding that the Pentateuch has passed through a period when a double method of using the divine name was practiced; the documents brought together in our Genesis are not thereby shown to be of different age or by different authors; perhaps they were transmitted by different schools of scribes; or perhaps it was different aims that determined the variations.

As some special causes that worked toward the variation of the latter from the earlier texts, I suggest these:— Probably in the oldest copies the oft recurring divine name was frequently expressed by abbreviations. The failure to recognize these, and the consequent *free* introduction of a name causes variation. In other cases the subject of the sentence was entirely lost, and must be supplied *de novo* according to the habit of the scribe and his own idea of the meaning of the phrase. Again, in the old documents, the subjects were very largely omitted even in the original; and this even in dialogues where to us it would seem to be imperative that they be given; the supplying of them later led to wrong meanings, and also to obliteration of the special characteristics of the earlier manuscript. Sometimes an explanation is introduced

to assist in understanding a passage that had been obscured by changes in spelling or by some similar cause. Moreover glosses and paraphrases have an importance in determining the present state of the text, which is often underestimated. Not simply are many evident insertions due to this cause, but we have no assurance that there are not great numbers of such cases now unnoticeable. Omissions too may sometimes be referred to this cause, for a scribe could easily regard as a gloss, and therefore omit, a passage that belonged to the text. Certain it is that the resulting text cannot properly be made the basis for such minute analysis as criticism nowadays makes.

Kautzsch and Socin* propose to exhibit the true state of Genesis; but they have adopted a method diametrically opposite to the proper one. Instead of using different types to indicate the differences, they should have let the type remain uniform, and have varied their language according to the characteristics on the basis of which the critics have been able to make so minute an analysis. Let vocabulary, grammar, idioms, dialects, vary with the narrator. Instead of this, they write an uniform German and change their type! It may be said that it would be difficult thus to reproduce linguistic features. But German is as rich in means for such an exercise as was Hebrew, and our scholars are as skillful as the ancients. Difficult indeed, and perhaps impossible, but the difficulty is far less than in making the analysis of the Hebrew on the lines mentioned. The book fails to represent the actual state of things also in that it parcels out to the various documents all the peculiarities of our present text, ignoring utterly the fact that necessarily great numbers of these must have arisen from the transmission of the text. The scientific course would be, first to set aside those linguistic phenomena which probably, yes even those that possibly, have arisen from causes known to have been operative, and then on the basis of the remaining ones make the analysis (if possible!) into independent authors. Criticism confuses the present Pentateuch and the history of its text, with the Archetype and the history of its origin,—a fatal mistake.

*“Die Genesis mit äusserer Unterscheidung der Quellschriften übersetzt.” 1888.

Twenty years ago I made a minute analysis of the Pentateuch. Years later, after studying the history of the text, I went over the analysis again, and found my great fund of arguments shrunk away to very meagre dimensions. In my Introduction to Samuel and Kings* I have tried to practice what I now preach, viz., that the discovery by textual criticism, of the original text of the Old Testament historical books must be kept distinct from the discovery of the authors' authorities by means of literary analysis. The latter must rest upon examination of the setting, the design, the general structure of the book concerned, and the relation of these to the content. Textual criticism on the other hand must get its direction from its own nature, not from this or that literary hypothesis.

In conclusion then, the fundamental errors of modern criticism are that it begins with J and E floating in primeval fog rather than starting with the Pentateuch as it left the hand of the final redactor and mounting thence to the source; and that it attempts to reconstruct those sources by means of our present text.

* "Die Bücher Samuelis und der Könige ausgelegt von Dr. August Klostermann." 1887. Pp. 15-40.